

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified patent application in view of the present amendment and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

This amendment requests entry of a substitute specification and a Proposed Drawing Amendment that were mailed with the Amendment After Final of April 17, 2003 and were not entered. The substitute specification includes no new matter. The changes to the specification include adding suffixes to the reference numbers so as to correspond to the reference numbers shown in the Proposed Drawing Amendment. The suffixes have been added to the reference numbers to overcome the objection that the drawings use the same reference numbers in different figures. Additionally, the specification has been amended to overcome the objection that the specification failed to provide antecedent basis for the exact terminology of previous claim 17. Page 4 of the specification has been amended to remove informalities. The substitute specification and Proposed Drawing Amendment overcome the objections to the specification and drawings.

This amendment adds new claims 29 and 30, cancels claims 17, 26, and 28, and amends claims 18, 22-24, and 27. New claim 30 is claim 26, which was indicated as allowable, rewritten in independent form. Claim 27, which was indicated as allowable, has been amended to depend from claim 30.

New claim 29 recites a ball-and-socket joint comprising a joint housing having first and second axial ends. A ball head

is provided with a ball stud extending from the ball head. A bearing shell has elastic properties and is received in the joint housing whereby the bearing shell receives the ball head. The ball stud extends outward of the first axial end of the joint housing. The ball-and-socket joint also comprises a housing cover for closing the second axial end of the joint housing. An elastic element is interposed between the housing cover and at least a portion of the bearing shell and preloads the portion of the bearing shell to urge the portion of the bearing shell toward the first axial end of the joint housing thereby plastically deforming the bearing shell into its final ball-shaped contour.

New claim 29 patentably defines over Flumerfelt, U.S. Patent No. 2,181,300, Littman, U.S. Patent No. 6,010,272, and Gottschald, U.S. Patent No. 2,993,717 (disclosed, but not cited, in the Advisory Action of May 13, 2003). Claim 29 recites an elastic element interposed between the housing cover and at least a portion of the bearing shell preloading the portion of the bearing shell to urge the portion of the bearing shell toward the first axial end of the joint housing thereby plastically deforming the portion of the bearing shell into its final ball-shaped contour. Flumerfelt, Littman, and Gottschald fail to teach or suggest this feature of claim 29. Specifically, none of the references teaches or suggests an elastic element that urges a portion of a bearing shell toward a first axial end of a joint housing and thereby plastically deforms the portion of the bearing shell into a final ball-

shaped contour. No portion of a bearing shell in Flumerfelt, Littman, or Gottschald is plastically deformed as recited in claim 29 into a final ball-shaped contour. Since none of the references teaches or suggests this feature of claim 29, a combination of the references also fails to teach or suggest the feature. Therefore, allowance of claim 29 is respectfully requested.


Claims 18 and 22-25 depend from claim 29 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 29.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified patent application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified patent application is respectfully requested.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached page is captioned "Version with markings to show changes made."

Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


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